Dillon Wasko

Curriculum Assessment

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In modern day society education is always evolving. Not only teachers and professors, but students, faculty members, and technology all play a factor in the advancement of education. Teachers often pick a basis or a combination of the three to signify their teaching. Student-centered learning is often criticized by older educators, but the fact is that student centered teaching often promotes many skills necessary in the real world. This varies from problem-solving, to critical thinking, and even reflective thinking. The whole theory of student-centered learning, is to put the student’s interest first. This not liked among traditional educators because they often feel that the knowledge should run through them or their problems. The benefits of student-centered education are astounding and it provides great rewards. Student-centered learning focuses on student traits pertaining to their interests, abilities, and learning styles. As an educator, the goal is to allow students to lead discussion. As a teacher the goal should be to make sure every student feels like their needs are being met in the fact that they are all contributing. Student-centered learning requires students to be both actively engaged in the conversation and responsible in the fact that they participate in their own pace of learning. Their own pace of learning may vary a bit, but it is the understanding that they are taking control of their own education. Progressivism is a philosophy of education that stresses the following: experiential learning, the scientific method and intrinsic motivation. This allowed students to advance upon their critical thinking skills, real life skills courses such as shop, laboratories, and art rooms. These things increased student’s internal motivation because they were doing real world things rather than just performing rote memorization. John Dewey was a very influential American educational reformer who played a huge role in education as we know it today. He felt that since the world is changing every day that it is important for students to receive hands-on education.

Another important theory is subject-centered learning. In this type of system, the focus is on curriculum development and not individual development. This type of teaching focuses on developing high standards for student uniformity or the idea that all students will be able to meet basic requirements. This is the idea that all students should meet certain criteria and that at each grade-level check points they will sufficiently past the standards which is a good thing. Teachers in these type of systems are often told what and how to teach rather than teaching to meet individual needs. Subject-centered learning is very beneficial in the fact that it gives some sort of standard to modern education, but it does not allow for individual needs to be met. Subject-centered education was originated by the government and spread into individual states. The main goal is to standardize students into a core curriculum. Often times in these types of classrooms students do not get to know their teachers personally due to the size of classrooms. Another disadvantage to this type of teaching style is the time that is wasted on meeting these curriculum standards. In this case subject-centered education is very traditional and it does not match very many modern needs.

Problem-based learning is very different than the other forms of teaching. The idea of problem-based learning is to encourage students to learn through solving problems. The varying forms of learning and the learned material should co-exist. Several goals of problem-based learning are to develop flexible knowledge, effective problem solving skills, self-directed learning, effective collaboration skills and an intrinsic motivation. An educator should promote group work both large and small. Group work encourages students to engage in what they know, what they need to know and how they will access the new information. Learning should be taught with guidance from the teacher and adequate monitoring of the material. This technique was first administered in medical schools and it is now being used all around the world. Problem-based learning requires advanced critical thinking skills and that is why it is often taught in upper education. Upper education is considered any post high school educational degree. Problem based learning is often a single-subject idea that tends to have shorter deadlines to which it needs to be completed. The guidelines to problem based learning are very specific and contain traditional prescribed steps. This means that the steps to solving these types of problems are almost always given to the student so they at that point just need to follow the steps. The risks to problem-based learning will definelty exist. Learning is often less organized and it becomes stressful to a lot of students, the time in which it takes to solve these problem-based problems is very long and content knowledge obtained will be lower than the other forms of teaching.

All three forms of teaching have advantages and disadvantages. Student-centered education is sometimes very difficult for some students to deal with. The classrooms pertaining to this environment are often very noisy and busy and may be distracting to students who get off task easy. This is also very difficult for structured students and parents who believe in standards and teaching to the curriculum. Student-centered education usually should be accompanied by another form of education as well because it is looked at as very modern and a bit lackluster. Traditional schools do not view this teaching method as very useful so it is often overshadowed by subject-centered education. This is thought to be true because student-centered education does not always get the subject across. Subject-centered education has many advantages and almost as many disadvantages. The fact is that standards are very important and that all students should be expected to meet these standards, but that is not always the case. Students are expected to meet the general criteria and learn the basic knowledge to an applicable level in society. This form of education also has its disadvantages in the fact that it does not allow for individual needs to be met. Students often times do “just enough” to get by and never truly advance their knowledge. Problem-based learning is very beneficial to extravert people, but individuals who prefer to work individually often times feel frustration. They may feel overshadowed in a group and do not always have the voice to command the situation. Problem-based learning is tough for students who have a hard time staying on task as well. This is due to the fact that in almost all groups there is always one student who feels that he or she can contribute very little and still get by.

I am a firm believer in the combination of all three forms of education. I am very pro student-centered education in the fact that it allows all students to grow within their own education personally. This should allow them to take command of their own lives and to feel a sense of importance in the classroom. Subject-based curriculum should not be avoided completely due to the fact that its importance of traditional standards should still be met. I want to make sure my students are still meeting the general standards expected for them to be successful in the real world. That may vary from going to college to joining the military or even to starting a career right out of high school. Problem-based learning is also important to incorporate in the fact that it will allow for more facilitating to take place and more student directed education. I feel that with the combination of all three of these teaching methods students will then be able to reach their full potential.

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